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TITLE OF INVENTIONTRANSFERRIN RECEPTOR GENES OF MORAXELLAFIELD OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to the molecular cloning of genes encoding transferrin receptor (TfR) proteins and, in particular, to the cloning of transferrin receptor genes from *Moraxella* (*Branhamella*) *catarrhalis*.

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a continuation-in-part of copending United States Patent Application No. 08/778,570 filed January 3, 1997, which itself is a continuation-in-part of United States Patent Application No. 08/613,009 filed March 8, 1996.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Moraxella (*Branhamella*) *catarrhalis* bacteria are Gram-negative diplococcal pathogens which are carried asymptotically in the healthy human respiratory tract.

In recent years, *M. catarrhalis* has been recognized as an important causative agent of otitis media. In addition, *M. catarrhalis* has been associated with sinusitis, conjunctivitis, and urogenital infections, as well as with a number of inflammatory diseases of the lower respiratory tract in children and adults, including pneumonia, chronic bronchitis, tracheitis, and emphysema (refs. 1 to 8). (Throughout this application, various references are cited in parentheses to describe more fully the state of the art to which this invention pertains. Full bibliographic information for each citation is found at the end of the specification, immediately preceding the claims. The disclosures of these references are hereby incorporated by reference

into the present disclosure). Occasionally, *M. catarrhalis* invades to cause septicaemia, arthritis, endocarditis, and meningitis (refs. 9 to 13).

Otitis media is one of the most common illnesses of early childhood and approximately 80% of all children suffer at least one middle ear infection before the age of three (ref. 14). Chronic otitis media has been associated with auditory and speech impairment in children, and in some cases, has been associated with learning disabilities. Conventional treatments for otitis media include antibiotic administration and surgical procedures, including tonsillectomies, adenoidectomies, and tympanocentesis. In the United States, treatment costs for otitis media are estimated to be between one and two billion dollars per year.

In otitis media cases, *M. catarrhalis* commonly is co-isolated from middle ear fluid along with *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and non-typable *Haemophilus influenzae*, which are believed to be responsible for 50% and 30% of otitis media infections, respectively. *M. catarrhalis* is believed to be responsible for approximately 20% of otitis media infections (ref. 15).

Epidemiological reports indicate that the number of cases of otitis media attributable to *M. catarrhalis* is increasing, along with the number of antibiotic-resistant isolates of *M. catarrhalis*. Thus, prior to 1970, no β -lactamase-producing *M. catarrhalis* isolates had been reported, but since the mid-seventies, an increasing number of β -lactamase-expressing isolates have been detected. Recent surveys suggest that 75% of clinical isolates produce β -lactamase (ref. 16, 26).

Iron is an essential nutrient for the growth of many bacteria. Several bacterial species, including *M. catarrhalis*, obtain iron from the host by using transferrin receptor proteins to capture transferrin. A number of bacteria including *Neisseria meningitidis*

(ref. 17), *N. gonorrhoeae* (ref. 18), *Haemophilus influenzae* (ref. 19), as well as *M. catarrhalis* (ref. 20), produce outer membrane proteins which specifically bind human transferrin. The expression of these proteins is regulated by the amount of iron in the environment.

The two transferrin receptor proteins of *M. catarrhalis*, designated transferrin binding protein 1 (Tbp1) and transferrin binding protein 2 (Tbp2), have molecular weights of 115 kDa (Tbp1) and approximately 80 to 90 kDa (Tbp2). Unlike the transferrin receptor proteins of other bacteria which have an affinity for apotransferrin, the *M. catarrhalis* Tbp2 receptors have a preferred affinity for iron-saturated (i.e., ferri-) transferrin (ref. 21).

M. catarrhalis infection may lead to serious disease. It would be advantageous to provide a recombinant source of transferrin binding proteins as antigens in immunogenic preparations including vaccines, carriers for other antigens and immunogens and the generation of diagnostic reagents. The genes encoding transferrin binding proteins and fragments thereof are particularly desirable and useful in the specific identification and diagnosis of *Moraxella* and for immunization against disease caused by *M. catarrhalis* and for the generation of diagnostic reagents.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed towards the provision of purified and isolated nucleic acid molecules encoding a transferrin receptor of a strain of *Moraxella* or a fragment or an analog of the transferrin receptor protein. The nucleic acid molecules provided herein are useful for the specific detection of strains of *Moraxella* and for diagnosis of infection by *Moraxella*. The purified and isolated nucleic acid

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molecules provided herein, such as DNA, are also useful for expressing the *tbp* genes by recombinant DNA means for providing, in an economical manner, purified and isolated transferrin receptor proteins as well as subunits, fragments or analogs thereof. The transferrin receptor, subunits or fragments thereof or analogs thereof, as well as nucleic acid molecules encoding the same and vectors containing such nucleic acid molecules, are useful in immunogenic compositions for vaccinating against diseases caused by *Moraxella*, the diagnosis of infection by *Moraxella* and as tools for the generation of immunological reagents. Monoclonal antibodies or mono-specific antisera (antibodies) raised against the transferrin receptor protein, produced in accordance with aspects of the present invention, are useful for the diagnosis of infection by *Moraxella*, the specific detection of *Moraxella* (in, for example, *in vitro* and *in vivo* assays) and for the treatment of diseases caused by *Moraxella*.

In accordance with one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding a transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella*, more particularly, a strain of *M. catarrhalis*, specifically *M. catarrhalis* strain 4223, Q8 or R1, or a fragment or an analog of the transferrin receptor protein.

In one preferred embodiment of the invention, the nucleic acid molecule may encode only the Tbp1 protein of the *Moraxella* strain or only the Tbp2 protein of the *Moraxella* strain. In another preferred embodiment of the invention, the nucleic acid may encode a fragment of the transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella* having an amino acid sequence which is conserved.

In another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a purified and isolated nucleic acid

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molecule having a DNA sequence selected from the group consisting of (a) a DNA sequence as set out in Figure 5, 6, 10, 11 or 27 (SEQ ID Nos: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 45 or 46) or the complementary DNA sequence thereto; (b) 5 a DNA sequence encoding an amino acid sequence as set out in Figure 5, 6, 10, 11 or 27 (SEQ ID Nos: 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 or 47) or the complementary DNA sequence thereto; and (c) a DNA sequence which hybridizes under stringent conditions to any one of the 10 DNA sequences defined in (a) or (b). The DNA sequence defined in (c) preferably has at least about 90% sequence identity with any one of the DNA sequences defined in (a) and (b). The DNA sequence defined in (c) may be that encoding the equivalent transferrin receptor protein from another strain of *Moraxella*. 15

In an additional aspect, the present invention includes a vector adapted for transformation of a host, comprising a nucleic acid molecule as provided herein and may have the characteristics of a nucleotide 20 sequence contained within vectors LEM3-24, pLEM3, pLEM25, pLEM23, SLRD-A, DS-1698-1-1, DS-1754-1, pSLRD2, pSLRD3, pSLRD4 and pSLRD5.

The vector may be adapted for expression of the encoded transferrin receptor, fragments or analogs 25 thereof, in a heterologous or homologous host, in either a lipidated or non-lipidated form. Accordingly, a further aspect of the present invention provides an expression vector adapted for transformation of a host comprising a nucleic acid molecule as provided herein and expression means operatively coupled to the nucleic 30 acid molecule for expression by the host of the transferrin receptor protein or the fragment or analog of the transferrin receptor protein. In specific embodiments of this aspect of the invention, the nucleic acid molecule may encode substantially all the 35 transferrin receptor protein, only the Tbp1 protein,

only the Tbp2 protein of the *Moraxella* strain or fragments of the Tbp1 or Tbp2 proteins. The expression means may include a promoter and a nucleic acid portion encoding a leader sequence for secretion from the host of the transferrin receptor protein or the fragment or the analog of the transferrin receptor protein. The expression means also may include a nucleic acid portion encoding a lipidation signal for expression from the host of a lipidated form of the transferrin receptor protein or the fragment or the analog of the transferrin receptor protein. The host may be selected from, for example, *Escherichia coli*, *Bordetella*, *Bacillus*, *Haemophilus*, *Moraxella*, fungi, yeast or baculovirus and Semliki Forest virus expression systems may be used. In a particular embodiment, the plasmid adapted for expression of Tbp1 is pLEM29 and that for expression of Tbp2 is pLEM33. Further vectors include pLEM-37, SLRD35-A and SLRD-35-B.

In an additional aspect of the invention, there is provided a transformed host containing an expression vector as provided herein. The invention further includes a recombinant transferrin receptor protein or fragment or analog thereof of a strain of *Moraxella* producible by the transformed host.

Such recombinant transferrin receptor protein may be provided in substantially pure form according to a further aspect of the invention, which provides a method of forming a substantially pure recombinant transferrin receptor protein, which comprises growing the transformed host provided herein to express a transferrin receptor protein as inclusion bodies, purifying the inclusion bodies free from cellular material and soluble proteins, solubilizing transferrin receptor protein from the purified inclusion bodies, and purifying the transferrin receptor protein free from other solubilized materials. The substantially pure

recombinant transferrin receptor protein may comprise Tbp1 alone, Tbp2 alone or a mixture thereof. The recombinant protein is generally at least about 70% pure, preferably at least about 90% pure.

5 Further aspects of the present invention, therefore, provide recombinantly-produced Tbp1 protein of a strain of *Moraxella* devoid of the Tbp2 protein of the *Moraxella* strain and any other protein of the *Moraxella* strain and recombinantly-produced Tbp2 protein
10 of a strain of *Moraxella* devoid of the Tbp1 protein of the *Moraxella* strain and any other protein of the *Moraxella* strain. The *Moraxella* strain may be *M. catarrhalis* 4223 strain, *M. catarrhalis* Q8 strain or *M. catarrhalis* R1 strain.

15 In accordance with another aspect of the invention, an immunogenic composition is provided which comprises at least one active component selected from at least one nucleic acid molecule as provided herein and at least one recombinant protein as provided herein, and a
20 pharmaceutically acceptable carrier therefor or vector therefor. The at least one active component produces an immune response when administered to a host.

The immunogenic compositions provided herein may be formulated as vaccines for *in vivo* administration to a
25 host. For such purpose, the compositions may be formulated as a microparticle, capsule, ISCOM or liposome preparation. The immunogenic composition may be provided in combination with a targeting molecule for delivery to specific cells of the immune system or to
30 mucosal surfaces. The immunogenic compositions of the invention (including vaccines) may further comprise at least one other immunogenic or immunostimulating material and the immunostimulating material may be at least one adjuvant or at least one cytokine. Suitable
35 adjuvants for use in the present invention include (but are not limited to) aluminum phosphate, aluminum

hydroxide, QS21, Quil A, derivatives and components thereof, ISCOM matrix, calcium phosphate, calcium hydroxide, zinc hydroxide, a glycolipid analog, an octadecyl ester of an amino acid, a muramyl dipeptide polyphosphazene, ISCOPREP, DC-chol, DDBA and a lipoprotein. Advantageous combinations of adjuvants are described in copending United States Patent Applications Nos. 08/261,194 filed June 16, 1994 and 08/483,856, filed June 7, 1995, assigned to the assignee hereof and the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference thereto (WO 95/34308).

In accordance with another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for generating an immune response in a host, comprising the step of administering to a susceptible host, such as a human, an effective amount of the immunogenic composition provided herein. The immune response may be a humoral or a cell-mediated immune response and may provide protection against disease caused by *Moraxella*. Hosts in which protection against disease may be conferred include primates, including humans.

In a further aspect, there is provided a live vector for delivery of transferrin receptor to a host, comprising a vector containing the nucleic acid molecule as described above. The vector may be selected from *Salmonella*, BCG, adenovirus, poxvirus, vaccinia and poliovirus.

The nucleic acid molecules provided herein are useful in diagnostic applications. Accordingly, in a further aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of determining the presence, in a sample, of nucleic acid encoding a transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella*, comprising the steps of:

(a) contacting the sample with a nucleic acid molecule as provided herein to produce duplexes comprising the nucleic acid molecule and any nucleic

acid molecule encoding the transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella* present in the sample and specifically hybridizable therewith; and

(b) determining the production of the duplexes.

5 In addition, the present invention provides a diagnostic kit for determining the presence, in a sample, of nucleic acid encoding a transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella*, comprising:

(a) a nucleic acid molecule as provided herein;

10 (b) means for contacting the nucleic acid molecule with the sample to produce duplexes comprising the nucleic acid molecule and any such nucleic acid present in the sample and hybridizable with the nucleic acid molecule; and

15 (c) means for determining production of the duplexes.

The invention further includes the use of the nucleic acid molecules and proteins provided herein as medicines. The invention additionally includes the use
20 of the nucleic acid molecules and proteins provided herein in the manufacture of medicaments for protection against infection by strains of *Moraxella*.

Advantages of the present invention include:

- an isolated and purified nucleic acid
25 molecule encoding a transferrin receptor protein of a strain of *Moraxella* or a fragment or an analog of the transferrin receptor protein;

- recombinantly-produced transferrin receptor proteins, including Tbp1 and Tbp2, free from each other
30 and other *Moraxella* proteins; and

- diagnostic kits and immunological reagents for specific identification of *Moraxella*.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

35 The present invention will be further understood from the following description with reference to the

drawings, in which:

Figure 1 shows the amino acid sequences (SEQ ID Nos: 17 and 18) of a conserved portion of Tbp1 proteins used for synthesis of degenerate primers used for PCR amplification of a portion of the *M. catarrhalis* 4223 *tbpA* gene;

Figure 2 shows a restriction map of clone LEM3-24 containing the *tbpA* and *tbpB* genes from *M. catarrhalis* isolate 4223;

Figure 3 shows a restriction map of the *tbpA* gene for *M. catarrhalis* 4223;

Figure 4 shows a restriction map of the *tbpB* gene for *M. catarrhalis* 4223;

Figure 5 shows the nucleotide sequence of the *tbpA* gene (SEQ ID No: 1 - entire sequence and SEQ ID No: 2 - coding sequence) and the deduced amino acid sequence of the Tbp1 protein from *M. catarrhalis* 4223 (SEQ ID No: 9 - full length and SEQ ID No: 10 - mature protein). The leader sequence (SEQ ID No: 19) is shown by underlining;

Figure 6 shows the nucleotide sequence of the *tbpB* gene (SEQ ID No: 3 - entire sequence and SEQ ID No: 4 - coding sequence) and the deduced amino acid sequence of the Tbp2 protein from *M. catarrhalis* 4223 (SEQ ID Nos: 11 - full length and SEQ ID No: 12 - mature protein). The leader sequence (SEQ ID No: 20) is shown by underlining;

Figure 7 shows a restriction map of clone SLRD-A containing the *tbpA* and *tbpB* genes from *M. catarrhalis* Q8;

Figure 8 shows a restriction map of the *tbpA* gene from *M. catarrhalis* Q8;

Figure 9 shows a restriction map of the *tbpB* gene from *M. catarrhalis* Q8;

Figure 10 shows the nucleotide sequence of the *tbpA* gene (SEQ ID No: 5 - entire sequence and SEQ ID No: 6 - coding sequence) and the deduced amino acid sequence of

the Tbp1 protein from *M. catarrhalis* Q8 (SEQ ID No: 13 - full length and SEQ ID No: 14 - mature protein);

Figure 11 shows the nucleotide sequence of the *tbpB* gene (SEQ. ID No: 7 - entire sequence and SEQ ID No: 8 - coding sequence) and the deduced amino acid sequence of the Tbp2 protein from *M. catarrhalis* Q8 (SEQ ID No: 15 - full length and SEQ ID No: 16 - mature protein);

Figure 12 shows a comparison of the amino acid sequences of Tbp1 from *M. catarrhalis* strain 4223 (SEQ ID No: 9) and Q8 (SEQ ID No: 13), *H. influenzae* strain Eagan (SEQ ID No: 21), *N. meningitidis* strains B16B6 (SEQ ID No: 22) and M982 (SEQ ID No: 23), and *N. gonorrhoeae* strain FA19 (SEQ ID No: 24). Dots indicate identical residues and dashes have been inserted for maximum alignment;

Figure 13 shows a comparison of the amino acid sequences of Tbp2 from *M. catarrhalis* isolate 4223 (SEQ ID No: 11) and Q8 (SEQ ID No: 15), *H. influenzae* strain Eagan (SEQ ID No: 25), *N. meningitidis* strains B16B6 (SEQ ID No: 26) and M918 (SEQ ID No: 27), and *N. gonorrhoeae* strain FA19 (SEQ ID No: 28). Dots indicate identical residues and dashes have been inserted for maximum alignment;

Figure 14 shows the construction of plasmid pLEM29 for expression of recombinant Tbp1 protein from *E. coli*;

Figure 15 shows an SDS-PAGE analysis of the expression of Tbp1 protein by *E. coli* cells transformed with plasmid pLEM29;

Figure 16 shows a flow chart for purification of recombinant Tbp1 protein;

Figure 17 shows an SDS-PAGE analysis of purified recombinant Tbp1 protein;

Figure 18 shows the construction of plasmid pLEM33 and pLEM37 for expression of TbpA gene from *M. catarrhalis* 4223 in *E. coli* without and with a leader sequence respectively;

Figure 19 shows an SDS-PAGE analysis of the expression of rTbp2 protein by *E. coli* cells transformed with plasmid pLEM37;

5 Figure 20 shows the construction of plasmid sLRD35B for expression of the *tbpB* gene from *M. catarrhalis* Q8 in *E. coli* without a leader sequence, and the construction of plasmid SLRD35A for expression of the *tbpB* gene from *M. catarrhalis* Q8 in *E. coli* with a leader sequence. Restriction site B = BamHI; Bg = Bgl II; H = Hind III; R = EcoRI;

10 Figure 21 shows SDS PAGE analysis of the expression of rTbp2 protein in *E. coli* cells, transformed with plasmids SLRD35A and SLRD35B;

15 Figure 22 shows a flow chart for purification of recombinant Tbp2 protein from *E. coli*;

Figure 23, which includes Panels A and B, shows an SDS-PAGE analysis of the purification of recombinant Tbp2 protein from *M. catarrhalis* strains 4223 (Panel A) and Q8 (Panel B) from expression in *E. coli*;

20 Figure 24 shows the binding of Tbp2 to human transferrin;

Figure 25, which includes Panels A, B and C, shows the antigenic conservation of Tbp2 protein amongst strains of *M. catarrhalis*;

25 Figure 26 shows a restriction map of the *tbpB* gene for *M. catarrhalis* R1;

30 Figure 27 shows the nucleotide sequence of the *tbpB* gene (SEQ ID No: 45 - entire sequence and SEQ ID No: 46 - coding sequence) and the deduced amino acid sequence of the Tbp2 protein of *M. catarrhalis* R1 (SEQ ID No: 47); and

Figure 28 shows a comparison of the amino acid sequences of Tbp2 for *M. catarrhalis* 4223 (SEQ ID No: 21), Q8 (SEQ ID No: 15) and R1 (SEQ ID No: 47). Dots indicate identical residues and dashes have been inserted for maximum alignment. The asterisks indicate

stop codons.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Any *Moraxella* strain may be conveniently used to
5 provide the purified and isolated nucleic acid, which
may be in the form of DNA molecules, comprising at least
a portion of the nucleic acid coding for a transferrin
receptor as typified by embodiments of the present
invention. Such strains are generally available from
10 clinical sources and from bacterial culture collections,
such as the American Type Culture Collection.

In this application, the terms "transferrin
receptor" (TfR) and "transferrin binding proteins" (Tbp)
are used to define a family of Tbp1 and/or Tbp2 proteins
15 which includes those having variations in their amino
acid sequences including those naturally occurring in
various strains of, for example, *Moraxella*. The
purified and isolated DNA molecules comprising at least
a portion coding for transferrin receptor of the present
20 invention also include those encoding functional analogs
of transferrin receptor proteins Tbp1 and Tbp2 of
Moraxella. In this application, a first protein is a
"functional analog" of a second protein if the first
protein is immunologically related to and/or has the
25 same function as the second protein. The functional
analog may be, for example, a fragment of the protein,
or a substitution, addition or deletion mutant thereof.

Chromosomal DNA from *M. catarrhalis* 4223 was
digested with *Sau*3A in order to generate fragments
30 within a 15 to 23 kb size range, and cloned into the
*Bam*HI site of the lambda vector EMBL3. The library was
screened with anti-Tbp1 guinea pig antisera, and a
positive clone LEM3-24, containing an insert
approximately 13.2 kb in size was selected for further
35 analysis. Lysate from *E. coli* LE392 infected with LEM3-
24 was found to contain a protein approximately 115 kDa

in size, which reacted on Western blots with anti-Tbp1 antisera. A second protein, approximately 80 kDa in size, reacted with the anti-Tbp2 guinea pig antisera on Western blots.

5 In order to localize the *tbpA* gene on the 13.2 kb insert of LEM3-24, degenerate PCR primers were used to amplify a small region of the putative *tbpA* gene of *M. catarrhalis* 4223. The sequences of the degenerate oligonucleotide primers were based upon conserved amino
10 acid sequences within the Tbp1 proteins of several *Neisseria* and *Haemophilus* species and are shown in Figure 1 (SEQ ID Nos: 17 and 18). A 300 base-pair amplified product was generated and its location within the 4223 *tbpA* gene is indicated by bold letters in
15 Figure 5 (SEQ ID No: 29). The amplified product was subcloned into the vector pCRII, labelled, and used to probe a Southern blot containing restriction-
20 endonuclease digested clone LEM3-24 DNA. The probe hybridized to a 3.8 kb *HindIII-HindIII*, a 2.0 kb *AvrII-AvrII*, and 4.2 kb *SalI-SphI* fragments (Figure 2).

The 3.8 kb *HindIII-HindIII* fragment was subcloned into pACYC177, and sequenced. A large open reading frame was identified, and subsequently found to contain approximately 2 kb of the putative *tbpA* gene. The
25 remaining 1 kb of the *tbpA* gene was obtained by subcloning an adjacent downstream *HindIII-HindIII* fragment into vector pACYC177. The nucleotide sequence of the *tbpA* gene from *M. catarrhalis* 4223 (SEQ ID Nos: 1 and 2), and the deduced amino acid sequence (SEQ ID
30 No: 9 - full length; SEQ ID No: 10 mature protein) are shown in Figure 5.

Chromosomal DNA from *M. catarrhalis* strain Q8 was digested with *Sau3A* I and 15-23 kb fragments were ligated with *BamHI* arms of EMBL3. A high titre library
35 was generated in *E. coli* LE392 cells and was screened using oligonucleotide probes based on the 4223 *tbpA*

sequence. Phage DNA was prepared and restriction enzyme analysis revealed that inserts of about 13-15 kb had been cloned. Phage clone SLRD-A was used to subclone fragments for sequence analysis. A cloning vector (pSKMA) was generated to facilitate cloning of the fragments and plasmids pSLRD1, pSLRD2, pSLRD3, pSLRD4 and pSLRD5 were generated which contain all of *tbpA* and most of *tbpB*. The nucleotide (SEQ ID Nos: 5 and 6) and deduced amino acid sequence (SEQ ID No: 13 - full length, SEQ ID No: 14 - mature protein) of the *tbpA* gene from strain Q8 are shown in Figure 10.

The deduced amino acid sequences for the Tbp1 protein encoded by the *tbpA* genes were found to share some homology with the amino acid sequences encoded by genes from a number of *Neisseria* and *Haemophilus* species (Figure 12; SEQ ID Nos: 21, 22, 23 and 24).

Prior to the present discovery, *tbpA* genes identified in species of *Neisseria*, *Haemophilus*, and *Actinobacillus* have been found to be preceded by a *tbpB* gene with several conserved regions. The two genes typically are separated by a short intergenic sequence. However, a *tbpB* gene was not found upstream of the *tbpA* gene in *M. catarrhalis* 4223. In order to localize the *tbpB* gene within the 13.2 kb insert of clone LEM3-24, a denenerate oligonucleotide probe was synthesized based upon an amino acid sequence EGGFYGP (SEQ ID No: 30), conserved among Tbp2 proteins of several species. The oligonucleotide was labelled and used to probe a Southern blot containing different restriction endonuclease fragments of clone LEM3-24. The probe hybridized to a 5.5 kb *NheI-SalI* fragment, which subsequently was subcloned into pBR328, and sequenced. The fragment contained most of the putative *tbpB* gene, with the exception of the promoter region. The clone LEM3-24 was sequenced to obtain the remaining upstream sequence. The *tbpB* gene was located approximately 3 kb

downstream from the end of the *tbpA* gene, in contrast to the genetic organization of the *tbpA* and *tbpB* genes in *Haemophilus* and *Neisseria*. The nucleotide sequence (SEQ ID Nos: 3 and 4) of the *tbpB* gene from *M. catarrhalis* 4223 and the deduced amino acid sequence (SEQ ID Nos: 11, 12) are shown in Figure 6. The *tbpB* gene from *M. catarrhalis* Q8 was also cloned and sequenced. The nucleotide sequence (SEQ ID Nos: 7 and 8) and the deduced amino acid sequence (SEQ ID Nos: 15 and 16) are shown in Figure 11. The *tbpB* gene from *M. catarrhalis* R1 was also cloned and sequenced. The nucleotide sequence (SEQ ID Nos: 45 and 46) and the deduced amino acid sequence (SEQ ID No: 47) are shown in Figure 27. Regions of homology are evident between the *M. catarrhalis* Tbp2 amino acid sequences as shown in the comparative alignment of Figure 28 (SEQ ID Nos: 11, 15 and 47) and between the *M. catarrhalis* Tbp2 amino acid sequences and the Tbp2 sequences of a number of *Neisseria* and *Haemophilus* species, as shown in the comparative alignment in Figure 13 (SEQ ID Nos: 25, 26, 27, 28).

Cloned *tbpA* and *tbpB* genes were expressed in *E. coli* to produce recombinant Tbp1 and Tbp2 proteins free of other *Moraxella* proteins. These recombinant proteins were purified and used for immunization.

The antigenic conservation of Tbp2 protein amongst strains of *M. catarrhalis* was demonstrated by separation of the proteins in whole cell lysates of *M. catarrhalis* or strains of *E. coli* expressing recombinant Tbp2 proteins by SDS PAGE and antiserum immunoblotting with anti-4223 rTbp2 antiserum or anti-Q8 rTbp2 antiserum raised in guinea pigs. *M. catarrhalis* strains 3, 56, 135, 585, 4223, 5191, 8185 and ATCC 25240 were tested in this way and all showed specific reactivity with anti-4223 rTbp2 or anti-Q8 rTbp2 antibody (Figure 25).

In addition, the ability of anti-rTbp2 antibodies from one strain to recognize native or recombinant protein from the homologous or heterologous strain by ELISA is shown in Table 1 below.

5 Amino acid sequencing of the N-termini and cyanogen bromide fragments of transferrin receptor from *M. catarrhalis* 4223 was undertaken. Both N-termini of Tbp1 and Tbp2 were blocked. The putative signal sequences of Tbp1 and Tbp2 are indicated by underlining in Figures 5 and 6 (SEQ ID Nos: 19 and 20) respectively. The deduced amino acid sequences for the N-terminal region of Tbp2 suggests a lipoprotein structure.

15 Results shown in Tables 1 and 2 below illustrate the ability of anti-Tbp1 and anti-Tbp2 guinea pig antisera, produced by the immunization with Tbp1 or Tbp2, to lyse *M. catarrhalis*. The results show that the antisera produced by immunization with Tbp1 or Tbp2 protein isolated from *M. catarrhalis* isolate 4223 were bactericidal against a homologous non-clumping *M. catarrhalis* strain RH408 (a strain previously deposited in connection with United States Patent Application No. 08/328,589, assigned to the assignee hereof, (WO 96/12733) with the American Type Culture Collection, located at 1301 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20852, USA under the terms of the Budapest Treaty on December 13, 1994 under ATCC Deposit No. 55,637) derived from isolate 4223. In addition, antisera produced by immunization with Tbp1 protein isolated from *M. catarrhalis* 4223 were bactericidal against the heterologous non-clumping strain Q8 (a gift from Dr. M.G. Bergeron, Centre Hospitalier de l'Université Laval, St. Foy, Quebec). In addition, antiserum raised against recombinant Tbp2 (rTbp2) protein was bacteriicidal against the homologous strain of *M. catarrhalis*.

35 The ability of isolated and purified transferrin binding proteins to generate bactericidal antibodies is

in vivo evidence of utility of these proteins as vaccines to protect against disease caused by *Moraxella*.

Thus, in accordance with another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a vaccine against infection caused by *Moraxella* strains, comprising an immunogenically-effective amount of a transferrin binding protein from a strain of *Moraxella* and a physiologically-acceptable carrier therefor. Vaccine preparations may comprise antigenically or sequence divergent transferrin binding proteins.

The transferrin binding protein provided herein is useful as a diagnostic reagent, as an antigen for the generation of anti-transferrin protein binding antibodies, as an antigen for vaccination against the disease caused by species of *Moraxella* and for detecting infection by *Moraxella* and other such bacteria.

The transferrin binding protein provided herein may also be used as a carrier protein for haptens, polysaccharides or peptides to make conjugate vaccines against antigenic determinants unrelated to transferrin binding proteins. In additional embodiments of the present invention, therefore, the transferrin binding protein as provided herein may be used as a carrier molecule to prepare chimeric molecules and conjugate vaccines (including glycoconjugates) against pathogenic bacteria, including encapsulated bacteria. Thus, for example, glycoconjugates of the present invention may be used to confer protection against disease and infection caused by any bacteria having polysaccharide antigens including lipooligosaccharides (LOS) and PRP. Such bacterial pathogens may include, for example, *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Escherichia coli*, *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Salmonella typhi*, *Streptococcus mutans*, *Cryptococcus neoformans*, *Klebsiella*, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. Particular antigens which can be conjugated

to transferrin binding protein and methods to achieve such conjugations are described in U.S. Patent Application No. 08/433,522 filed November 23, 1993 (WO 94/12641), assigned to the assignee hereof and the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference thereto.

In another embodiment, the carrier function of transferrin binding protein may be used, for example, to induce an immune response against abnormal polysaccharides of tumour cells, or to produce anti-tumour antibodies that can be conjugated to chemotherapeutic or bioactive agents.

The invention extends to transferrin binding proteins from *Moraxella catarrhalis* for use as an active ingredient in a vaccine against disease caused by infection with *Moraxella*. The invention also extends to a pharmaceutical vaccinal composition containing transferrin binding proteins from *Moraxella catarrhalis* and optionally, a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier and/or diluent.

In a further aspect the invention provides the use of transferrin binding proteins for the preparation of a pharmaceutical vaccinal composition for immunization against disease caused by infection with *Moraxella*.

It is clearly apparent to one skilled in the art, that the various embodiments of the present invention have many applications in the fields of vaccination, diagnosis, treatment of, for example, *Moraxella* infections and the generation of immunological and other diagnostic reagents. A further non-limiting discussion of such uses is further presented below.

1. Vaccine Preparation and Use

Immunogenic compositions, suitable to be used as vaccines, may be prepared from immunogenic transferrin receptor proteins, analogs and fragments thereof encoded by the nucleic acid molecules as well as the nucleic

acid molecules disclosed herein. The vaccine elicits an immune response which produces antibodies, including anti-transferrin receptor antibodies and antibodies that are opsonizing or bactericidal. Should the vaccinated subject be challenged by *Moraxella*, the antibodies bind to the transferrin receptor and thereby prevent access of the bacteria to an iron source which is required for viability. Furthermore, opsonizing or bactericidal anti-transferrin receptor antibodies may also provide protection by alternative mechanisms.

Immunogenic compositions, including vaccines, may be prepared as injectables, as liquid solutions or emulsions. The transferrin receptor proteins, analogs and fragments thereof and encoding nucleic acid molecules may be mixed with pharmaceutically acceptable excipients which are compatible with the transferrin receptor proteins, fragments, analogs or nucleic acid molecules. Such excipients may include water, saline, dextrose, glycerol, ethanol, and combinations thereof.

The immunogenic compositions and vaccines may further contain auxiliary substances, such as wetting or emulsifying agents, pH buffering agents, or adjuvants, to enhance the effectiveness of the vaccines.

Immunogenic compositions and vaccines may be administered parenterally, by injection subcutaneously, intradermally or intramuscularly. Alternatively, the immunogenic compositions provided according to the present invention, may be formulated and delivered in a manner to evoke an immune response at mucosal surfaces.

Thus, the immunogenic composition may be administered to mucosal surfaces by, for example, the nasal or oral (intragastric) routes. The immunogenic composition may be provided in combination with a targeting molecule for delivery to specific cells of the immune system or to mucosal surfaces. Some such targeting molecules include vitamin B12 and fragments of bacterial toxins, as

described in WO 92/17167 (Biotech Australia Pty. Ltd.), and monoclonal antibodies, as described in U.S. Patent No. 5,194,254 (Barber et al). Alternatively, other modes of administration, including suppositories and oral formulations, may be desirable. For suppositories, binders and carriers may include, for example, polyalkalene glycols or triglycerides. Oral formulations may include normally employed incipients such as, for example, pharmaceutical grades of saccharine, cellulose and magnesium carbonate. These compositions may take the form of solutions, suspensions, tablets, pills, capsules, sustained release formulations or powders and contain about 1 to 95% of the transferrin receptor proteins, fragments, analogs and/or nucleic acid molecules.

The vaccines are administered in a manner compatible with the dosage formulation, and in such amount as will be therapeutically effective, protective and immunogenic. The quantity to be administered depends on the subject to be treated, including, for example, the capacity of the individual's immune system to synthesize antibodies, and, if needed, to produce a cell-mediated immune response. Precise amounts of active ingredient required to be administered depend on the judgment of the practitioner. However, suitable dosage ranges are readily determinable by one skilled in the art and may be of the order of micrograms of the transferrin receptor proteins, analogs and fragments thereof and/or nucleic acid molecules. Suitable regimes for initial administration and booster doses are also variable, but may include an initial administration followed by subsequent administrations. The dosage of the vaccine may also depend on the route of administration and will vary according to the size of the host.

The nucleic acid molecules encoding the transferrin

receptor of *Moraxella* may be used directly for immunization by administration of the DNA directly, for example, by injection for genetic immunization or by constructing a live vector, such as *Salmonella*, BCG, adenovirus, poxvirus, vaccinia or poliovirus containing the nucleic acid molecules. A discussion of some live vectors that have been used to carry heterologous antigens to the immune system is contained in, for example, O'Hagan (ref 22). Processes for the direct injection of DNA into test subjects for genetic immunization are described in, for example, Ulmer et al. (ref. 23).

Immunogenicity can be significantly improved if the antigens are co-administered with adjuvants, commonly used as an 0.05 to 1.0 percent solution in phosphate - buffered saline. Adjuvants enhance the immunogenicity of an antigen but are not necessarily immunogenic themselves. Adjuvants may act by retaining the antigen locally near the site of administration to produce a depot effect facilitating a slow, sustained release of antigen to cells of the immune system. Adjuvants can also attract cells of the immune system to an antigen depot and stimulate such cells to elicit immune responses.

Immunostimulatory agents or adjuvants have been used for many years to improve the host immune responses to, for example, vaccines. Intrinsic adjuvants, such as lipopolysaccharides, normally are the components of killed or attenuated bacteria used as vaccines. Extrinsic adjuvants are immunomodulators which are typically non-covalently linked to antigens and are formulated to enhance the host immune responses. Thus, adjuvants have been identified that enhance the immune response to antigens delivered parenterally. Some of these adjuvants are toxic, however, and can cause undesirable side-effects, making them unsuitable for use

in humans and many animals. Indeed, only aluminum hydroxide and aluminum phosphate (collectively commonly referred to as alum) are routinely used as adjuvants in human and veterinary vaccines. The efficacy of alum in increasing antibody responses to diphtheria and tetanus toxoids is well established and an HBsAg vaccine has been adjuvanted with alum. While the usefulness of alum is well established for some applications, it has limitations. For example, alum is ineffective for influenza vaccination and inconsistently elicits a cell mediated immune response. The antibodies elicited by alum-adjuvanted antigens are mainly of the IgG1 isotype in the mouse, which may not be optimal for protection by some vaccinal agents.

A wide range of extrinsic adjuvants can provoke potent immune responses to antigens. These include saponins complexed to membrane protein antigens (immune stimulating complexes), pluronic polymers with mineral oil, killed mycobacteria and mineral oil, Freund's complete adjuvant, bacterial products, such as muramyl dipeptide (MDP) and lipopolysaccharide (LPS), as well as lipid A, and liposomes.

To efficiently induce humoral immune responses (HIR) and cell-mediated immunity (CMI), immunogens are often emulsified in adjuvants. Many adjuvants are toxic, inducing granulomas, acute and chronic inflammations (Freund's complete adjuvant, FCA), cytotoxicity (saponins and pluronic polymers) and pyrogenicity, arthritis and anterior uveitis (LPS and MDP). Although FCA is an excellent adjuvant and widely used in research, it is not licensed for use in human or veterinary vaccines because of its toxicity.

Desirable characteristics of ideal adjuvants include:

- (1) lack of toxicity;
- (2) ability to stimulate a long-lasting immune

response;

(3) simplicity of manufacture and stability in long-term storage;

5 (4) ability to elicit both CMI and HIR to antigens administered by various routes, if required;

(5) synergy with other adjuvants;

(6) capability of selectively interacting with populations of antigen presenting cells (APC);

10 (7) ability to specifically elicit appropriate T_H1 or T_H2 cell-specific immune responses; and

(8) ability to selectively increase appropriate antibody isotype levels (for example, IgA) against antigens.

U.S. Patent No. 4,855,283 granted to Lockhoff et al
15 on August 8, 1989, which is incorporated herein by reference thereto, teaches glycolipid analogues including N-glycosylamides, N-glycosylureas and N-glycosylcarbamates, each of which is substituted in the sugar residue by an amino acid, as immuno-modulators or
20 adjuvants. Thus, Lockhoff et al. 1991 (ref. 24) reported that N-glycolipid analogs displaying structural similarities to the naturally-occurring glycolipids, such as glycopospholipids and glycoglycerolipids, are capable of eliciting strong immune responses in both
25 herpes simplex virus vaccine and pseudorabies virus vaccine. Some glycolipids have been synthesized from long chain-alkylamines and fatty acids that are linked directly with the sugars through the anomeric carbon atom, to mimic the functions of the naturally occurring
30 lipid residues.

U.S. Patent No. 4,258,029 granted to Moloney, assigned to the assignee hereof and incorporated herein by reference thereto, teaches that octadecyl tyrosine hydrochloride (OTH) functions as an adjuvant when
35 complexed with tetanus toxoid and formalin inactivated type I, II and III poliomyelitis virus vaccine. Also,

Nixon-George et al. 1990, (ref. 25) reported that octadecyl esters of aromatic amino acids complexed with a recombinant hepatitis B surface antigen, enhanced the host immune responses against hepatitis B virus.

5 **2. Immunoassays**

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The transferrin receptor proteins, analogs and/or fragments thereof of the present invention are useful as immunogens, as antigens in immunoassays including enzyme-linked immunosorbent assays (ELISA), RIAs and other non-enzyme linked antibody binding assays or procedures known in the art for the detection of anti-*Moraxella*, transferrin receptor protein antibodies. In ELISA assays, the transferrin receptor protein, analogs and/or fragments corresponding to portions of TfR protein, are immobilized onto a selected surface, for example, a surface capable of binding proteins or peptides such as the wells of a polystyrene microtiter plate. After washing to remove incompletely adsorbed transferrin receptor, analogs and/or fragments, a non-specific protein such as a solution of bovine serum albumin (BSA) or casein that is known to be antigenically neutral with regard to the test sample may be bound to the selected surface. This allows for blocking of nonspecific adsorption sites on the immobilizing surface and thus reduces the background caused by non-specific bindings of antisera onto the surface.

The immobilizing surface is then contacted with a sample, such as clinical or biological materials, to be tested in a manner conducive to immune complex (antigen/antibody) formation. This procedure may include diluting the sample with diluents, such as BSA, bovine gamma globulin (BGG) and/or phosphate buffered saline (PBS)/Tween. The sample is then allowed to
35 incubate for from about 2 to 4 hours, at temperatures such as of the order of about 25° to 37°C. Following

incubation, the sample-contacted surface is washed to remove non-immunocomplexed material. The washing procedure may include washing with a solution such as PBS/Tween or a borate buffer.

5 Following formation of specific immunocomplexes between the test sample and the bound transferrin receptor protein, analogs and/or fragments and subsequent washing, the occurrence, and even amount, of immunocomplex formation may be determined by subjecting
10 the immunocomplex to a second antibody having specificity for the first antibody. If the test sample is of human origin, the second antibody is an antibody having specificity for human immunoglobulins and in general IgG. To provide detecting means, the second
15 antibody may have an associated activity such as an enzymatic activity that will generate, for example, a color development upon incubating with an appropriate chromogenic substrate. Quantification may then achieved by measuring the degree of color generation using, for
20 example, a spectrophotometer.

3. Use of Sequences as Hybridization Probes

The nucleotide sequences of the present invention, comprising the sequence of the transferrin receptor gene, now allow for the identification and cloning of
25 the transferrin receptor genes from any species of *Moraxella*.

The nucleotide sequences comprising the sequence of the transferrin receptor genes of the present invention are useful for their ability to selectively form duplex
30 molecules with complementary stretches of other TfR genes. Depending on the application, a variety of hybridization conditions may be employed to achieve varying degrees of selectivity of the probe toward the other TfR genes. For a high degree of selectivity,
35 relatively stringent conditions are used to form the duplexes, such as low salt and/or high temperature

conditions, such as provided by 0.02 M to 0.15 M NaCl at temperatures of between about 50°C to 70°C. For some applications, less stringent hybridization conditions are required such as 0.15 M to 0.9 M salt, at temperatures ranging from between about 20°C to 55°C. Hybridization conditions can also be rendered more stringent by the addition of increasing amounts of formamide, to destabilize the hybrid duplex. Thus, particular hybridization conditions can be readily manipulated, and will generally be a method of choice depending on the desired results. In general, convenient hybridization temperatures in the presence of 50% formamide are: 42°C for a probe which is 95 to 100% homologous to the target fragment, 37°C for 90 to 95% homology and 32°C for 85 to 90% homology.

In a clinical diagnostic embodiment, the nucleic acid sequences of the TfR genes of the present invention may be used in combination with an appropriate means, such as a label, for determining hybridization. A wide variety of appropriate indicator means are known in the art, including radioactive, enzymatic or other ligands, such as avidin/biotin and digoxigenin-labelling, which are capable of providing a detectable signal. In some diagnostic embodiments, an enzyme tag such as urease, alkaline phosphatase or peroxidase, instead of a radioactive tag may be used. In the case of enzyme tags, colorimetric indicator substrates are known which can be employed to provide a means visible to the human eye or spectrophotometrically, to identify specific hybridization with samples containing TfR gene sequences.

The nucleic acid sequences of TfR genes of the present invention are useful as hybridization probes in solution hybridizations and in embodiments employing solid-phase procedures. In embodiments involving solid-

phase procedures, the test DNA (or RNA) from samples, such as clinical samples, including exudates, body fluids (e. g., serum, amniotic fluid, middle ear effusion, sputum, bronchoalveolar lavage fluid) or even tissues, is adsorbed or otherwise affixed to a selected matrix or surface. The fixed, single-stranded nucleic acid is then subjected to specific hybridization with selected probes comprising the nucleic acid sequences of the TfR genes or fragments thereof of the present invention under desired conditions. The selected conditions will depend on the particular circumstances based on the particular criteria required depending on, for example, the G+C contents, type of target nucleic acid, source of nucleic acid, size of hybridization probe etc. Following washing of the hybridization surface so as to remove non-specifically bound probe molecules, specific hybridization is detected, or even quantified, by means of the label. It is preferred to select nucleic acid sequence portions which are conserved among species of *Moraxella*. The selected probe may be at least 18bp and may be in the range of about 30 to 90 bp.

4. Expression of the Transferrin Receptor Genes

Plasmid vectors containing replicon and control sequences which are derived from species compatible with the host cell may be used for the expression of the transferrin receptor genes in expression systems. The vector ordinarily carries a replication site, as well as marking sequences which are capable of providing phenotypic selection in transformed cells. For example, *E. coli* may be transformed using pBR322 which contains genes for ampicillin and tetracycline resistance and thus provides easy means for identifying transformed cells. The pBR322 plasmid, or other microbial plasmid or phage, must also contain, or be modified to contain, promoters which can be used by the host cell for

expression of its own proteins.

In addition, phage vectors containing replicon and control sequences that are compatible with the host can be used as a transforming vector in connection with these hosts. For example, the phage in lambda GEMTM-11 may be utilized in making recombinant phage vectors which can be used to transform host cells, such as *E. coli* LE392.

Promoters commonly used in recombinant DNA construction include the β -lactamase (penicillinase) and lactose promoter systems and other microbial promoters, such as the T7 promoter system as described in U.S. Patent No. 4,952,496. Details concerning the nucleotide sequences of promoters are known, enabling a skilled worker to ligate them functionally with genes. The particular promoter used will generally be a matter of choice depending upon the desired results. Hosts that are appropriate for expression of the transferrin receptor genes, fragments, analogs or variants thereof, may include *E. coli*, *Bacillus* species, *Haemophilus*, fungi, yeast, *Moraxella*, *Bordetella*, or the baculovirus expression system may be used.

In accordance with this invention, it is preferred to make the transferrin receptor protein, fragment or analog thereof, by recombinant methods, particularly since the naturally occurring TfR protein as purified from a culture of a species of *Moraxella* may include trace amounts of toxic materials or other contaminants.

This problem can be avoided by using recombinantly produced TfR protein in heterologous systems which can be isolated from the host in a manner to minimize contaminants in the purified material. Particularly desirable hosts for expression in this regard include Gram positive bacteria which do not have LPS and are, therefore, endotoxin free. Such hosts include species of *Bacillus* and may be particularly useful for the

production of non-pyrogenic transferrin receptor, fragments or analogs thereof. Furthermore, recombinant methods of production permit the manufacture of Tbp1 or Tbp2 or respective analogs or fragments thereof, separate from one another which is distinct from the normal combined proteins present in *Moraxella*.

Biological Deposits

Certain vectors that contain at least a portion coding for a transferrin receptor protein from strains of *Moraxella catarrhalis* strain 4223 and Q8 and a strain of *M. catarrhalis* RH408 that are described and referred to herein have been deposited with the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) located at 12301 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, Maryland, USA, pursuant to the Budapest Treaty and prior to the filing of this application. Samples of the deposited vectors and bacterial strain will become available to the public and the restrictions imposed on access to the deposits will be removed upon grant of a patent based upon this United States patent application. In addition, the deposit will be replaced if viable samples cannot be dispensed by the Depository. The invention described and claimed herein is not to be limited in scope by the biological materials deposited, since the deposited embodiment is intended only as an illustration of the invention. Any equivalent or similar vectors or strains that encode similar or equivalent antigens as described in this application are within the scope of the invention.

Deposit Summary

DEPOSIT	ATCC DESIGNATION	DATE DEPOSITED
Phage LEM3-24	97,381	December 4, 1995
Phage SLRD-A	97,380	December 4, 1995
Plasmid pLEM29	97,461	March 8, 1996
Plasmid pSLRD35A	97,833	January 13, 1997
Plasmid pLEM37	97,834	January 13, 1997
Strain RH408	55,637	December 9, 1994

EXAMPLES

5 The above disclosure generally describes the present invention. A more complete understanding can be obtained by reference to the following specific Examples. These Examples are described solely for purposes of illustration and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention. Changes in form and substitution of equivalents are contemplated as circumstances may suggest or render expedient. Although specific terms have been employed herein, such terms are intended in a descriptive sense and not for purposes of limitations.

10 Methods of molecular genetics, protein biochemistry and immunology used but not explicitly described in this disclosure and these Examples are amply reported in the scientific literature and are well within the ability of those skilled in the art.

Example 1

25 This Example illustrates the preparation and immunization of guinea pigs with Tbp1 and Tbp2 proteins from *M. catarrhalis*.

Tbp1 and Tbp2 proteins were obtained as follows:

Iron-starved crude total membrane preparations were diluted to 4 mg protein/ml in 50 mM Tris.HCl-1M NaCl, pH 8, in a total volume of 384 ml. Membranes were solubilized by the addition of 8 ml each of 0.5M EDTA and 30% sarkosyl and samples were incubated for 2 hours at room temperature, with gentle agitation. Solubilized membranes were centrifuged at 10K rpm for 20 min. 15 ml of apo-hTf-Sepharose 4B were added to the supernatant, and incubated for 2 hours at room temperature, with gentle shaking. The mixture was added into a column. The column was washed with 50 ml of 50mM Tris.HCl-1 M NaCl-250mM guanidine hydrochloride, to remove contaminating proteins. Tbp2 was eluted from the column by the addition of 100 ml of 1.5M guanidine hydrochloride. Tbp1 was eluted by the addition of 100 ml of 3M guanidine hydrochloride. The first 20 ml fractions were dialyzed against 3 changes of 50 mM Tris.HCl, pH 8.0. Samples were stored at -20°C, or dialyzed against ammonium bicarbonate and lyophilized.

Guinea pigs (Charles River) were immunized intramuscularly on day +1 with a 10 µg dose of Tbp1 or Tbp2 emulsified in complete Freund's adjuvant. Animals were boosted on days +14 and +29 with the same dose of protein emulsified in incomplete Freund's adjuvant. Blood samples were taken on day +42, and sera were used for analysis of bactericidal antibody activity. In addition, all antisera were assessed by immunoblot analysis for reactivity with *M. catarrhalis* 4223 proteins.

The bactericidal antibody activity of guinea pig anti-*M. catarrhalis* 4223 Tbp1 or Tbp2 antisera was determined as follows. A non-clumping *M. catarrhalis* strain RH408, derived from isolate 4223, was inoculated into 20 ml of BHI broth, and grown for 18 hr at 37°C, shaking at 170 rpm. One ml of this culture was used to

inoculate 20 ml of BHI supplemented with 25 mM ethylenediamine-di-hydroxyphenylacetic acid (EDDA; Sigma). The culture was grown to an OD₆₀₀ of 0.5. The cells were diluted 1:200,000 in 140 mM NaCl, 93mM NaHCO₃, 2mM Na barbiturate, 4mM barbituric acid, 0.5mM MgCl₂.6H₂O, 0.4mM CaCl₂.2H₂O, pH 7.6 (Veronal buffer), containing 0.1% bovine serum albumin (VBS) and placed on ice. Guinea pig anti-*M. catarrhalis* 4223 Tbp1 or Tbp2 antisera, along with prebleed control antisera, were heated to 56°C for 30 min. to inactivate endogenous complement. Serial twofold dilutions of each antisera in VBS were added to the wells of a 96-well Nunclon microtitre plate (Nunc, Roskilde, Denmark). Dilutions started at 1:8, and were prepared to a final volume of 25 µL in each well. 25 µL of diluted bacterial cells were added to each of the wells. A guinea pig complement (Biowhittaker, Walkersville, MD) was diluted 1:10 in VBS, and 25 µL portions were added to each well.

The plates were incubated at 37°C for 60 min, gently shaking at 70 rpm on a rotary platform. 50 µL of each reaction mixture were plated onto Mueller Hinton (Becton-Dickinson, Cockeysville, MD) agar plates. The plates were incubated at 37°C for 72 hr and the number of colonies per plate were counted. Bactericidal titres were assessed as the reciprocal of the highest dilution of antiserum capable of killing greater than 50% of bacteria compared with controls containing pre-immune sera. Results shown in Table 1 below illustrate the ability of the anti-Tbp1 and anti-Tbp2 guinea pig antisera to lyse *M. catarrhalis*.

Example 2

This Example illustrates the preparation of chromosomal DNA from *M. catarrhalis* strains 4223 and Q8.

M. catarrhalis isolate 4223 was inoculated into 100 ml of BHI broth, and incubated for 18 hr at 37°C with

shaking. The cells were harvested by centrifugation at 10,000 x g for 20 min. The pellet was used for extraction of *M. catarrhalis* 4223 chromosomal DNA.

The cell pellet was resuspended in 20 ml of 10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5)-1.0 mM EDTA (TE). Pronase and SDS were added to final concentrations of 500 µg/ml and 1.0%, respectively, and the suspension was incubated at 37°C for 2 hr. After several sequential extractions with phenol, phenol:chloroform (1:1), and chloroform:isoamyl alcohol (24:1), the aqueous extract was dialysed, at 4°C, against 1.0 M NaCl for 4 hr, and against TE (pH 7.5) for a further 48 hr with three buffer changes. Two volumes of ethanol were added to the dialysate, and the DNA was spooled onto a glass rod. The DNA was allowed to air-dry, and was dissolved in 3.0 ml of water. Concentration was estimated, by UV spectrophotometry, to be about 290 µg/ml.

M. catarrhalis strain Q8 was grown in BHI broth as described in Example 1. Cells were pelleted from 50 ml of culture by centrifugation at 5000 rpm for 20 minutes, at 4°C. The cell pellet was resuspended in 10 ml of TE (10 mM Tris-HCl, 1 mM EDTA, pH 7.5) and proteinase K and SDS were added to final concentrations of 500 µg/ml and 1%, respectively. The sample was incubated at 37°C for 4 hours until a clear lysate was obtained. The lysate was extracted twice with Tris-saturated phenol/chloroform (1:1), and twice with chloroform. The final aqueous phase was dialysed for 24 hours against 2 X 1000 ml of 1 M NaCl at 4°C, changing the buffer once, and for 24 hours against 2 x 1000 ml of TE at 4°C, changing the buffer once. The final dialysate was precipitated with two volume of 100% ethanol. The DNA was spooled, dried and resuspended in 5 to 10 ml of TE buffer.

Example 3

This Example illustrates the construction of *M.*

catarrhalis chromosomal libraries in EMBL3.

A series of *Sau*3A restriction digests of chromosomal DNA, in final volumes of 10 μ L each, were carried out in order to optimize the conditions necessary to generate maximal amounts of restriction fragments within a 15 to 23 kb size range. Using the optimized digestion conditions, a large-scale digestion was set up in a 100 μ L volume, containing the following:

50 μ L of chromosomal DNA (290 μ g/ml), 33 μ L water, 10 μ L 10X *Sau*3A buffer (New England Biolabs), 1.0 μ L BSA (10 mg/ml, New England Biolabs), and 6.3 μ L *Sau*3A (0.04 U/ μ L). Following a 15 min. incubation at 37°C, the digestion was terminated by the addition of 10 μ L of 100 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.0)-10 mM EDTA-0.1% bromophenol blue-50% glycerol (loading buffer). Digested DNA was electrophoresed through a 0.5% agarose gel in 40 mM Tris acetate-2 mM Na₂EDTA.2H₂O (pH8.5) (TAE buffer) at 50 V for 6 hr. The region containing restriction fragments within a 15 to 23 kb molecular size range was excised from the gel, and placed into dialysis tubing containing 3.0 ml of TAE buffer. DNA was electroeluted from the gel fragment by applying a field strength of 1.0 V/cm for 18 hr. Electroeluted DNA was extracted once each with phenol and phenol:chloroform (1:1), and precipitated with ethanol. The dried DNA was dissolved in 5.0 μ L water.

Size-fractionated chromosomal DNA was ligated with *Bam*HI-digested EMBL3 arms (Promega), using T4 DNA ligase in a final volume of 9 μ L. The entire ligation mixture was packaged into lambda phage using a commercial packaging kit (Amersham), following manufacturer's instructions.

The packaged DNA library was amplified on solid media. 0.1 ml aliquots of *Escherichia coli* strain NM539 in 10 mM MgSO₄ (OD₆₀₀ = 0.5) were incubated at 37°C for 15

min. with 15 to 25 μ L of the packaged DNA library. Samples were mixed with 3 ml of 0.6% agarose containing 1.0% BBL trypticase peptone-0.5% NaCl (BBL top agarose), and mixtures were plated onto 1.5% agar plates containing 1.0% BBL trypticase peptone-0.5% NaCl, and incubated at 37°C for 18 hr. 3 ml quantities of 50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5)-8 mM magnesium sulfate heptahydrate-100 mM NaCl-0.01% (w/v) gelatin (SM buffer) were added to each plate, and plates were left at 4°C for 7 hr. SM buffer containing phage was collected from the plates, pooled together, and stored in a screwcap tube at 4°C, with chloroform.

Chromosomal DNA from *M. catarrhalis* strain Q8 was digested with Sau3A I (0.1 unit/30 μ g DNA) at 37°C for 30 minutes and size-fractionated on a 0.6% low melting point agarose gel. DNA fragments of 15-23 kb were excised and the DNA was electroeluted for 25 minutes in dialysis tubing containing TAE (40 mM Tris acetate pH 8.5, 2 mM EDTA) at 150 V. The DNA was extracted once with phenol/chloroform (1:1), precipitated, and resuspended in water. The DNA was ligated overnight with EMBL3 BamH I arms (Promega) and the ligation mixture was packaged using the Lambda *in vitro* packaging kit (Stratagene) and plated onto *E. coli* LE392 cells. The library was titrated and stored at 4°C in the presence of 0.3% chloroform.

Example 4

This Example illustrates screening of the *M. catarrhalis* libraries.

Ten μ L aliquots of phage stock from the EMBL3/4223 sample prepared in Example 3 above were combined each with 100 μ L of *E. coli* strain LE392 in 10 mM MgSO₄ (OD₆₀₀ = 0.5) (plating cells), and incubated at 37°C for 15 min.

The samples were mixed with 3 ml each of BBL top agarose, and the mixtures were poured onto 1.5% agarose

plates containing 1% bacto tryptone-0.5% bacto yeast extract-0.05% NaCl (LB agarose; Difco) and supplemented with 200 μ M EDDA. The plates were incubated at 37°C for 18 hr. Plaques were lifted onto nitrocellulose filters (Amersham Hybond-C Extra) using a standard protocol, and the filters were immersed into 5% bovine serum albumin (BSA; Boehringer) in 20 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5)-150 mM NaCl (TBS) for 30 min at room temperature, or 4°C overnight. Filters were incubated for at least 1 hr at room temperature, or 18 hr at 4°C, in TBS containing a 1/1000 dilution of guinea pig anti-*M. catarrhalis* 4223 Tbp1 antiserum. Following four sequential 10 min. washes in TBS with 0.05% Tween 20 (TBS-Tween), filters were incubated for 30 min. at room temperature in TBS-Tween containing a 1/4000 dilution of recombinant Protein G labelled with horseradish peroxidase (rProtein G-HRP; Zymed). Filters were washed as above, and submerged into CN/DAB substrate solution (Pierce). Color development was arrested by immersing the filters into water. Positive plaques were cored from the plates, and each placed into 0.5 ml of SM buffer containing a few drops of chloroform. The screening procedure was repeated two more times, until 100% of the lifted plaques were positive using the guinea pig anti-*M. catarrhalis* 4223 Tbp1 antiserum.

The EMBL3/Q8 library was plated onto LE392 cells on YT plates using 0.7% top agar in YT as overlay. Plaques were lifted onto nitrocellulose filters and the filters were probed with oligonucleotide probes labelled with 32 P α -dCTP (Random Primed DNA labeling kit, Boehringer Mannheim). The pre-hybridization was performed in sodium chloride/sodium citrate (SSC) buffer (ref. 27) at 37°C for 1 hour and the hybridization was performed at 42°C overnight. The probes were based upon an internal sequence of 4223 *tbpA*:

I R D L T R Y D P G

(Seq ID No. 31)

4236-RD 5' ATTCGAGACTTAACACGCTATGACCCTGGC 3'

(Seq ID No 32)

5 4237-RD 5' ATTCGTGATTAACTCGCTATGACCCTGGT 3'

(Seq ID No 33).

Putative plaques were re-plated and submitted to second and third rounds of screening using the same procedures.

10 Phage clone SLRD-A was used to subclone the *tfr* genes for sequence analysis.

Example 5

15 This Example illustrates immunoblot analysis of the phage lysates using anti-*M. catarrhalis* 4223 Tbp1 and Tbp2 antisera.

Proteins expressed by the phage eluants selected in Example 4 above were precipitated as follows. 60 µL of each phage eluant were combined with 200 µL *E. coli* LE392 plating cells, and incubated at 37°C for 15 min.

20 The mixture was inoculated into 10 ml of 1.0% NZamine A-0.5% NaCl-0.1% casamino acids-0.5% yeast extract-0.2% magnesium sulfate heptahydrate (NZCYM broth), supplemented with 200 mM EDDA, and grown at 37°C for 18 hr, with shaking. DNase was added to 1.0 ml of the

25 culture, to a final concentration of 50 µg/ml, and the sample was incubated at 37°C for 30 min.

Trichloroacetic acid was added to a final concentration of 12.5%, and the mixture was left on ice for 15 min. Proteins were pelleted by centrifugation at 13,000 x g

30 for 10 min, and the pellet was washed with 1.0 ml of acetone. The pellet was air-dried and resuspended in 50 µL 4% SDS-20 mM Tris- HCl (pH 8.0)-0.2 mM EDTA (lysis buffer).

35 Following SDS-PAGE electrophoresis through an 11.5% gel, the proteins were transferred to Immobilon-P

filters (Millipore) at a constant voltage of 20 V for 18 hr, in 25mM Tris-HCl, 220mM glycine-20% methanol (transfer buffer). Membranes were blocked in 5% BSA in TBS for 30 min. at room temperature. Blots were exposed either to guinea pig anti-*M. catarrhalis* 4223 Tbp1, or to guinea pig anti-*M. catarrhalis* 4223 Tbp2 antiserum, diluted 1/500 in TBS-Tween, for 2 hr at room temperature. Following three sequential 10 min. washes in TBS-Tween, membranes were incubated in TBS-Tween containing a 1/4000 dilution of rProtein G-HRP for 30 min. at room temperature. Membranes were washed as described above, and immersed into CN/DAB substrate solution. Color development was arrested by immersing blots into water.

Three EMBL3 phage clones expressed both a 115 kDa protein which reacted with anti-Tbp1 antiserum, and an 80 kDa protein, which reacted with anti-Tbp2 antiserum on Western blots and were thus concluded to contain genes encoding the transferrin receptor proteins of *Moraxella catarrhalis*.

Example 6

This Example illustrates the subcloning of the *M. catarrhalis* 4223 Tbp1 protein gene, *tbpA*.

Plate lysate cultures of the recombinant phage described in Example 5 were prepared by combining phage eluant and *E. coli* LE392 plating cells, to produce confluent lysis on LB agar plates. Phage DNA was extracted from the plate lysates using a Wizard Lambda Preps DNA Purification System (Promega), according to manufacturer's instructions.

The EMBL3 clone LM3-24 was found to contain a 13.2 kb insert, flanked by two *SalI* sites. A probe to a *tbpA* gene was prepared and consisted of a 300 base pair amplified product generated by PCR using two degenerate oligonucleotide primers corresponding to an amino acid sequence of part of the Tbp1 protein (Figure 1). The

primer sequences were based upon the amino acid sequences NEVTGLG (SEQ ID No: 17) and GAINEIE (SEQ ID No: 18), which had been found to be conserved among the deduced amino acid sequences from several different *N. meningitidis* and *Haemophilus influenzae* *tbpA* genes. The amplified product was cloned into pCRII (Invitrogen, San Diego, CA) and sequenced. The deduced amino acid sequence shared homology with other putative amino acid sequences derived from *N. meningitidis* and *H. influenzae* *tbpA* genes (Figure 12). The subclone was linearized with *NotI* (New England Biolabs), and labelled using a digoxigenin random-labelling kit (Boehringer Mannheim), according to manufacturer's instructions. The concentration of the probe was estimated to be 2 ng/ μ L.

DNA from the phage clone was digested with *HindIII*, *AvrII*, *SalI/SphI*, or *SalI/AvrII*, and electrophoresed through a 0.8% agarose gel. DNA was transferred to a nylon membrane (Genescreen Plus, Dupont) using an LKB VacuGene XL vacuum transfer apparatus (Pharmacia). Following transfer, the blot was air-dried, and pre-hybridized in 5X SSC-0.1% N-lauroylsarcosine-0.02% sodium dodecyl sulfate-1.0% blocking reagent (Boehringer Mannheim) in 10 mM maleic acid-15 mM NaCl (pH 7.5) (pre-hybridization solution). Labelled probe was added to the pre-hybridization solution to a final concentration of 6 ng/ml, and the blot was incubated in the probe solution at 42°C for 18 hr. The blot was washed twice in 2X SSC-0.1% SDS, for 5 min. each at room temperature, then twice in 0.1X SSC-0.1% SDS for 15 min. each at 60°C. Following the washes, the membrane was equilibrated in 100mM maleic acid-150 mM NaCl (pH 7.5) (buffer 1) for 1 min, then left in 1.0% blocking reagent (Boehringer Mannheim) in buffer 1 (buffer 2) for 60 min, at room temperature. The blot was exposed to anti-DIG-alkaline phosphatase (Boehringer Mannheim) diluted 1/5000 in buffer 2, for 30 min. at room temperature.

Following two 15 min. washes in buffer 1, the blot was equilibrated in 100 mM Tris-HCl (pH 9.5), 100 mM NaCl, 50 mM MgCl₂ (buffer 3) for 2 min. The blot was wetted with Lumigen PPD substrate (Boehringer-Mannheim), diluted 1/100 in buffer 3, then wrapped in Saran wrap, and exposed to X-ray film for 30 min. The probe hybridized to a 3.8 kb *Hind*III-*Hind*III, a 2.0 kb *Avr*II-*Avr*II, and a 4.2 kb *Sal*I-*Sph*I fragment.

In order to subclone the 3.8 kb *Hind*III-*Hind*III fragment into pACYC177, phage DNA from the EMBL3 clone, and plasmid DNA from the vector pACYC177 (New England Biolabs), were digested with *Hind*III, and fractionated by electrophoresis on a 0.8% agarose gel. The 3.8 kb *Hind*III-*Hind*III phage DNA fragment, and the 3.9 kb *Hind*III-*Hind*III pACYC177 fragment, were excised from the gel and purified using a Geneclean kit (Bio 101 Inc., LaJolla, CA), according to manufacturer's directions. Purified insert and vector were ligated together using T4 DNA ligase (New England Biolabs), and transformed into *E. coli* HB101 (Gibco BRL). A Qiagen Plasmid Midi-Kit (Qiagen) was used to extract and purify sequencing-quality DNA from one of the ampicillin-resistant/kanamycin-sensitive transformants, which was found to carry a 3.8 kb *Hind*III-*Hind*III insert. The subclone was named pLEM3. As described in Example 7, below, subsequent sequencing revealed that pLEM3 contained the first about 2.0 kb of *tbpA* sequence (Figures 2 and 5).

In order to subclone the remaining 1 kb of the *tbpA* gene, a 1.6 kb *Hind*III-*Hind*III fragment was subcloned into pACYC177 as described above, and transformed by electroporation into *E. coli* HB101 (Gibco BRL). A Midi-Plasmid DNA kit (Qiagen) was used to extract plasmid DNA from a putative kanamycin-sensitive transformant carrying a plasmid with a 1.6 kb *Hind*III-*Hind*III insert. The subclone was termed pLEM25. As described in

Example 7 below, sequencing revealed that pLEM25 contained the remaining 1 kb of the *tbpA* gene (Figure 2 and 5).

Example 7

5 This Example illustrates the subcloning of the *M. catarrhalis* 4223 *tbpB* gene.

As described above, in all *Neisseriae* and *Haemophilus* species examined prior to the present invention, *tbpB* genes have been found immediately
10 upstream of the *tbpA* genes which share homology with the *tbpA* gene of *M. catarrhalis* 4223. However, the sequence upstream of *M. catarrhalis* 4223 did not correspond with other sequences encoding *tbpB*.

In order to localize the *tbpB* gene within the EMBL3
15 phage clone, a Southern blot was carried out using a degenerate probe from a highly conserved amino acid region within the Tbp2 protein. A degenerate oligonucleotide probe, was designed corresponding to the sequence encoding EGGFYGP (SEQ ID No: 30), which is
20 conserved within the Tbp2 protein in a variety of *Neisseriae* and *Haemophilus* species. The probe was labelled with digoxigenin using an oligonucleotide tailing kit (Boehringer Mannheim), following the manufacturer's instructions. *Hind*III - digested EMBL3
25 clone DNA was fractionated through a 0.8% agarose gel, and transferred to a Geneclean Plus nylon membrane as described in Example 6. Following hybridization as described above, the membrane was washed twice in 2X SSC-0.1% SDS, for 5 min. each at room temperature, then
30 twice in 0.1X SSC-0.1% SDS for 15 min. each, at 50°C. Detection of the labelled probe was carried out as described above. The probe hybridized to a 5.5 kb *Nhe*I-*Sal*I fragment.

The 5.5 kb *Nhe*I-*Sal*I fragment was subcloned into
35 pBR328 as follows. LEM3-24 DNA, and pBR328 DNA, were digested with *Nhe*I-*Sal*I, and electrophoresed through

0.8% agarose. The 5.5 kb *NheI-SalI* fragment, and the 4.9 kb pBR328 *NheI-SalI* fragments were excised from the gel, and purified using a Geneclean kit as described in Example 6. The fragments were ligated together using T4 DNA ligase, and transformed into *E. coli* DH5. A Midi-Plasmid DNA kit (Qiagen) was used to extract DNA from an ampicillin resistant / tetracycline sensitive clone containing a 5.5 kb *NheI-SalI* insert. This subclone was termed pLEM23. Sequencing revealed that pLEM23 contained 2 kb of the *tbpB* gene from *M. catarrhalis* 4223 (Figure 2).

Example 8:

This Example illustrates the subcloning of *M. catarrhalis* Q8 *tfr* genes.

The *M. catarrhalis* Q8 *tfr* genes were subcloned as follows. Phage DNA was prepared from plates. Briefly, the top agarose layer from three confluent plates was scraped into 9 ml of SM buffer (0.1 M NaCl, 0.2% MgSO₄, 50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 7.6, 0.01% gelatin) and 100 µl of chloroform was added. The mixture was vortexed for 10 sec, then incubated at room temperature for 2h. The cell debris was removed by centrifugation at 8000 rpm for 15 min at 4°C in an SS34 rotor (Sorvall model RC5C). The phage was pelleted by centrifugation at 35,000 rpm in a 70.1 Ti rotor at 10°C for 2h (Beckman model L8-80) and was resuspended in 500 µl of SM buffer. The sample was incubated at 4°C overnight, then RNase and DNase were added to final concentrations of 40 µg/ml and 10 µg/ml, respectively and the mixture incubated at 37°C for 1h. To the mixture were added 10 µl of 0.5 M EDTA and 5 µl of 10% SDS and the sample was incubated at 6°C for 15 min. The mixture was extracted twice with phenol/chloroform (1:1) and twice with chloroform and the DNA was precipitated by the addition of 2.5 volumes of absolute ethanol.

A partial restriction map was generated and fragments were subcloned using the external Sal I sites from EMBL3 and internal AvrII or EcoR I sites as indicated in Figure 4. In order to facilitate the subcloning, plasmid pSKMA was constructed which introduces a novel multiple cloning site into pBluescript.SK (Stratagene). Oligonucleotides were used to introduce restriction sites for Mst II, Sfi I, and Avr II between the Sal I and Hind III sites of pBluescript.SK:

	Sal I	Cla I	Mst II	Sfi I	Avr II	HindIII
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
15	4639-RD	5'	TCGACGGTAT	CGATGGCC	TTAG	GGGC CTAGGA 3'
			(SEQ ID No: 34)			
	4640-RD	3'	GCCATA	GCTACCGG	AATC	CCCG GATCCTTCGA
			(SEQ ID No: 35)			

Plasmid pSLRD1 contains a ~1.5 kb Sal I-Avr II fragment cloned into pSKMA; plasmids pSLRD2 and pSLRD4 contain ~2 kb and 4 kb AvrII-AvrII fragments cloned into pSKMA, respectively and contain the complete *tbpA* gene. Plasmid pSLRD3 contains a ~2.3 kb AvrII-EcoR I fragment cloned into pSKMA and plasmid SLRD5 is a 22.7 kb EcoRI - EcoRI fragment cloned into pSKMA. These two clones contain the complete *tbpB* gene (Figure 7).

Example 9

This Example illustrates sequencing of the *M. catarrhalis* *tbp* genes.

Both strands of the *tbp* genes subcloned according to Examples 6 to 8 were sequenced using an Applied Biosystems DNA sequencer. The sequences of the *M. catarrhalis* 4223 and Q8 *tbpA* genes are shown in Figures 5 and 10 respectively. A derived amino acid sequence was compared with other Tbp1 amino acid sequences, including

those of *Neisseriae meningitidis*, *Neisseriae gonorrhoeae*, and *Haemophilus influenzae* (Figure 12). The sequence of the *M. catarrhalis* 4223 and Q8 *tbpB* genes are shown in Figures 6 and 11 respectively. In order to obtain sequence from the putative beginning of the *tbpB* gene of *M. catarrhalis* 4223, sequence data were obtained directly from the clone LEM3-24 DNA. This sequence was verified by screening clone DS-1754-1. The sequence of the translated *tbpB* genes from *M. catarrhalis* 4223 and Q8 shared homology with deduced Tbp2 amino acid sequences of *Neisseria meningitidis*, *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, and *Haemophilus influenzae* (Figure 13).

Example 10

This Example illustrates the generation of an expression vector to produce recombinant Tbp1 protein. The construction scheme is shown in Figure 14.

Plasmid DNA from subclone pLEM3, prepared as described in Example 6, was digested with *Hind*III and *Bgl*I to generate a 1.84 kb *Bgl*I-*Hind*III fragment, containing approximately two-thirds of the *tbpA* gene. *Bam*HI was added to the digest to eliminate a comigrating 1.89kb *Bgl*I-*Hind*III vector fragment. In addition, plasmid DNA from the vector pT7-7 was digested with *Nde*I and *Hind*III. To create the beginning of the *tbpA* gene, an oligonucleotide was synthesized based upon the first 61 bases of the *tbpA* gene to the *Bgl*I site; an *Nde*I site was incorporated into the 5' end. Purified insert, vector and oligonucleotide were ligated together using T4 ligase (New England Biolabs), and transformed into *E. coli* DH5 α . DNA was purified from one of the 4.4 kb ampicillin-resistant transformants containing correct restriction sites (pLEM27).

Purified pLEM27 DNA was digested with *Hind*III, ligated to the 1.6 kb *Hind*III-*Hind*III insert fragment

of pLEM25 prepared as described in Example 6, and transformed into *E. coli* DH5 α . DNA was purified from an ampicillin-resistant transformant containing the correct restriction sites (pLEM29), and was transformed by electroporation into BL21 (DE3) (Novagen; Madison, WI) to produce *E. coli* pLEM29B-1.

A single isolated transformed colony was used to inoculate 100 ml of YT broth containing 100 μ g/ml ampicillin, and the culture was grown at 37 $^{\circ}$ C overnight, shaking at 200 rpm. 200 μ l of the overnight culture were inoculated into 10 ml of YT broth containing 100 μ g/ml ampicillin, and the culture was grown at 37 $^{\circ}$ C to an OD₅₇₈ of 0.35. The culture was induced by the addition of 30 μ l of 100 mM IPTG, and the culture was grown at 37 $^{\circ}$ C for an additional 3 hours. One ml of culture was removed at the time of induction (t=0), and at t=1 hr and t=3 hrs. One ml samples were pelleted by centrifugation, and resuspended in 4%SDS-20 mM Tris.Cl, pH 8-200 μ M EDTA (lysis buffer). Samples were fractionated on an 11.5% SDS-PAGE gel, and transferred onto Immobilon filters (Amersham). Blots were developed using anti-Tbpl (*M. catarrhalis* 4223) antiserum, diluted 1:1000, as the primary antibody, and rproteinG conjugated with horseradish peroxidase (Zymed) as the secondary antibody. A chemiluminescent substrate (Lumiglo; Kirkegaard and Perry Laboratories, Gaithersburg, MD) was used for detection. Induced recombinant proteins were visible on the Coomassie-stained gels (Fig 15). The anti-Tbpl (4223) antiserum recognized the recombinant proteins on Western blots.

Example 11

This Example illustrates the extraction and purification of recombinant Tbpl of *M. catarrhalis* 4223.

Recombinant Tbpl protein, which is contained in inclusion bodies, was purified from *E. coli* cells

expressing the *tbpA* gene (Example 10), by a procedure as shown in Figure 16. *E. coli* cells from a 500 ml culture, prepared as described in Example 10, were resuspended in 50 ml of 50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0 containing 0.1 M NaCl and 5 mM AEBSF (protease inhibitor), and disrupted by sonication (3 x 10 min. 70% duty cycle). The extract was centrifuged at 20,000 x g for 30 min. and the resultant supernatant which contained > 85% of the soluble proteins from *E. coli* was discarded.

The remaining pellet (Figure 16, PPT₁) was further extracted in 50 ml of 50 mM Tris, pH 8.0 containing 0.5% Triton X-100 and 10 mM EDTA. After centrifugation at 20,000 x g for 30 min., the supernatant containing residual soluble proteins and the majority of the membrane proteins was discarded.

The remaining pellet (Figure 16, PPT₂) was further extracted in 50 ml of 50 mM Tris, pH 8.0 containing 2M urea and 5 mM dithiothreitol (DTT). After centrifugation at 20,000 x g for 30 min., the resultant pellet (Figure 16, PPT₃) obtained after the above extraction contained the purified inclusion bodies.

The Tbp1 protein was solubilized from PPT₃ in 50 mM Tris, pH 8.0, containing 6 M guanidine hydrochloride and 5 mM DTT. After centrifugation, the resultant supernatant was further purified on a Superdex 200 gel filtration column equilibrated in 50 mM Tris, pH 8.0, containing 2M guanidine hydrochloride and 5 mM DTT. The fractions were analyzed by SDS-PAGE and those containing purified Tbp1 were pooled. Triton X-100 was added to the pooled Tbp1 fraction to a final concentration of 0.1%. The fraction was then dialyzed overnight at 4°C against 50 mM Tris, pH 8.0 and then centrifuged at 20,000 x g for 30 min. The protein remained soluble under these conditions and the purified Tbp1 was stored at -20° C. The purification procedure shown in Figure

16 produced Tbp1 protein that was at least 70% pure as determined by SDS-PAGE analysis (Figure 17).

Example 12

5 This Example illustrates the construction of an expression plasmid for rTbp2 of *M. catarrhalis* 4223 without a leader sequence.

The construction scheme for the plasmid expressing rTbp2 is shown in Figure 18. Oligonucleotides were used to construct the first approximately 58 bp of the
10 *M. catarrhalis* 4223 *tbpB* gene encoding the mature protein. An *NdeI* site was incorporated into the 5' end of the oligonucleotides:

5' TATGTGTGGTGGCAGTGGTGGTTCAAATCCACCTGCTCCTACGCCCATT
15 CCAAATG (SEQ ID NO: 36) 3'

3' ACACACCACCGTCACCACCAAGTTTAGGTGGACGAGGATGCGGGTAAGG
TTTACGATC (SEQ ID NO: 37) 5'

An *NheI*-*ClaI* fragment, containing approximately 1kb of
20 the *tbpB* gene from pLEM23, prepared as described in Example 7, was ligated to the above oligonucleotides and inserted into pT7-7 cut with *NdeI*-*ClaI*, generating pLEM31, which thus contains the 5'-half of *tbpB*. Oligonucleotides also were used to construct the last
25 approximately 104 bp of the *tbpB* gene, from the *AvaII* site to the end of the gene. A *BamHI* site was incorporated into the 3' end of the oligonucleotides:

5' GTCCAAATGCAAACGAGATGGGCGGGTCATTTACACACAACGCCGATG
30 ACAGCAAAGCCTCTGTGGTCTTTGGCACAAAAGACAACAAGAAGTTAAGTAGTA
G (SEQ ID NO: 38) 3'

3' GTTTACGTTTGCTCTACCCGCCCAGTAAATGTGTGTTGCGGCTACTGTC
GTTTCGGAGACACCAGAAACCGTGTTTTTCTGTTGTTCTTCAATTCATCATCCTAG
35 (SEQ ID NO: 39) 5'

A *Cla*I-*Ava*II fragment from pLEM23, containing approximately 0.9 kb of the 3'-end of the *tbpB* gene, was ligated to the *Ava*II-*Bam*HI oligonucleotides, and inserted into pT7-7 cut with *Cla*I-*Bam*HI, generating pLEM32. The 1.0 kb *Nde*I-*Cla*I insert from pLEM31 and the 1.0 kb *Cla*I-*Bam*HI insert from pLEM32 were then inserted into pT7-7 cut with *Nde*I-*Bam*HI, generating pLEM33 which has a full-length *tbpB* gene under the direction of the T7 promoter.

DNA was purified from pLEM33 and transformed by electroporation into electrocompetent BL21(DE3) cells (Novagen; Madison, WI), to generate strain pLEM33B-1. Strain pLEM33B-1 was grown, and induced using IPTG, as described above in Example 10. Expressed proteins were resolved by SDS-PAGE and transferred to membranes suitable for immunoblotting. Blots were developed using anti-4223 Tbp2 antiserum, diluted 1:4000, as the primary antibody, and rprotein G conjugated with horseradish peroxidase (Zymed) as the secondary antibody. A chemiluminescent substrate (Lumiglo; Kirkegaard and Perry Laboratories, Gaithersburg, MD) was used for detection. Induced recombinant proteins were visible on the Coomassie blue-stained gels (Fig. 19). The anti-4223 Tbp2 antiserum recognized the recombinant proteins on Western blots.

Example 13

This Example illustrates the generation of an expression plasmid for rTbp2 of *M. catarrhalis* 4223 with a leader sequence.

The construction scheme is shown in Figure 18. Oligonucleotides containing the natural leader sequence of the *M. catarrhalis* 4223 *tbpB* gene were used to construct the first approximately 115 bp of the *tbpB* gene to the *Nhe*I site. An *Nde*I site was incorporated into the 5' end of the oligonucleotides:

5' TATGAAACACATTCCTTTAACCACACTGTGTGTGGCAATCTCTGCCGTC
TTATTAACCGCTTGTGGTGGCAGTGGTGGTTCAAATCCACCTGCTCCTACGCCCAT
TCCAAATG (SEQ ID NO: 40) 3'

5 3' ACTTTGTGTAAGGAAATTGGTGTGACACACACCGTTAGAGACGGCAGAA
TAATTGGCGAACACCACCGTCACCACCAAGTTTAGGTGGACGAGGATGCGGGTAAG
GTTTACGATC (SEQ ID NO: 41) 5'

10 The *NdeI*-*NheI* oligonucleotides were ligated to pLEM33
cut with *NdeI*-*NheI*, generating pLEM37, which thus
contains a full-length 4223 *tbpB* gene encoding the Tbp2
protein with its leader sequence, driven by the T7
promoter.

15 DNA from pLEM37 was purified and transformed by
electroporation into electrocompetent BL21(DE3) cells
(Novagen; Madison, WI), to generate strain pLEM37B-2.
pLEM37B-2 was grown, and induced using IPTG, as
described above in Example 10. Expressed proteins were
resolved by SDS-PAGE and transferred to membranes
20 suitable for immunoblotting. Blots were developed
using anti-4223 Tbp2 antiserum, diluted 1:4000, as the
primary antibody, and rprotein G conjugated with
horseradish peroxidase (Zymed) as the secondary
antibody. A chemiluminescent substrate (Lumiglo;
25 Kirkegaard and Perry Laboratories, Gaithersburg, MD)
was used for detection. Induced recombinant proteins
were visible on Coomassie-blue stained gels (Fig. 21).
The anti-4223 Tbp2 antiserum recognized the
recombinant proteins on Western blots.

30 **Example 14**

This Example illustrates the construction of an
expression plasmid for rTbp2 of *M. catarrhalis* Q8
without a leader sequence.

35 The construction scheme for rTbp2 is shown in
Figure 20. The 5'-end of the *tbpB* gene of *M.*
catarrhalis Q8 was PCR amplified from the Cys¹ codon of

the mature protein through the Bsm I restriction site.

An Nde I restriction site was introduced at the 5' end, for later cloning into pT7-7, and the final PCR fragment was 238 bp in length. The PCR primers are indicated below:

```

          NdeI   C   G   G   S   S   G   G   F   N
5' GAATTCCATATG TGT GGT GGG AGC TCT GGT GGT TTC AAT C
3' 5247.RD (SEQ ID No: 42)

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10
5' CCCATGGCAGGTTCTTGAATGCCTGAAACT          3'          5236.RD
(SEQ ID No: 43).

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The Q8 *tbpB* gene was subcloned in two fragments contained on plasmids SLRD3 and SLRD5, prepared as described in Example 8. Plasmid SLRD3-5 was constructed to contain the full-length *tbpB* gene by digesting SLRD5 with EcoR I and Dra I, which releases the 3'-end of *tbpB*, and inserting this ~ 619 bp fragment into SLRD3 which had been digested with EcoR I and Sma I. The 1.85 kb Bsm I-BamH I fragment from SLRD 3-5 was ligated with the 238 bp PCR fragment and inserted into pT7-7 that had been digested with Nde I and BamH I, generating plasmid SLRD35B. This plasmid thus contains the full-length *tbpB* gene without its leader sequence, under the direction of the T7 promoter. DNA from SLRD35B was purified and transformed by electroporation into electrocompetent BL21(DE3) cells to generate strain SLRD35BD which was grown and induced using IPTG, as described above in Example 10. Expressed proteins were resolved by SDS-PAGE and the induced Tbp2 protein was clearly visible by Coomassie blue staining (Fig. 19).

Example 15

This Example illustrates the generation of an expression plasmid for rTbp2 of *M. catarrhalis* Q8 with

a leader sequence.

The construction scheme for the rTbp2 is shown in Figure 20. The 5'-end of the Q8 *tbpB* gene was PCR amplified from the ATG start codon to the Bsm I restriction site. An Nde I site was engineered at the 5'-end, to facilitate cloning into the pT7-7 expression vector, and the final PCR fragment was 295 bp. The PCR primers are indicated below:

10 Nde I K H I P L T
5' GAATTCCATATG AAA CAC ATT CCT TTA ACC 3' 5235.RD
(SEQ ID No: 44)

15 5' CCCATGGCAGGTTCTTGAATGCCTGAAACT 3' 5236.RD
(SEQ ID No: 43).

SLRD3-5 (Example 14) was digested with Bsm I and BamH I, generating a 1.85 kb fragment, which was ligated with the 295bp PCR fragment and ligated into pT7-7 that had been digested with Nde I and BamH I. The resulting plasmid SLRD35A thus contains the full-length Q8 *tbpB* gene with its endogenous leader sequence under the control of the T7 promoter. DNA from SLRD35A was purified and transformed by electroporation into electrocompetent BL21(DE3) cells to generate strain SLRD35AD which was grown and induced using IPTG, as described above in Example 10. Expressed proteins were resolved by SDS-PAGE and the induced Tbp2 protein was clearly visible by Coomassie blue staining (Fig. 19).

30 **Example 16**

This Example illustrates the extraction and purification of rTbp2 of *M. catarrhalis* 4223 and Q8 from *E. coli*.

35 pLEM37B (4223) and SLRD35AD (Q8) transformants were grown to produce Tbp2 in inclusion bodies and then the Tbp2 was purified according to the scheme in Figure

22. *E. coli* cells from a 500 mL culture, were resuspended in 50 mL of 50 mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.0 containing 5 mM AEBSF (protease inhibitor), and disrupted by sonication (3 x 10 min, 70% duty circle).
5 The extract was centrifuged at 20,000 x g for 30 min and the resultant supernatant which contained > 95% of the soluble proteins from *E. coli* was discarded.

The remaining pellet (PPT₁) was further extracted in 50 mL of 50 mM Tris, pH 8.0 containing 0.5% Triton X-100 and 10 mM EDTA. The mixture was stirred at 4°C
10 for at least 2 hours and then centrifuged at 20,000 x g for 30 min and the supernatant containing residual soluble proteins and the majority of the membrane proteins was discarded.

The resultant pellet (PPT₂) obtained after the above extraction contained the inclusion bodies. The Tbp2 protein was solubilized in 50 mM Tris, pH 8.0, containing 6 M guanidine and 5 mM DTT. After centrifugation, the resultant supernatant was further
15 purified on a Superdex 200 gel filtration column equilibrated in 50 mM Tris, pH 8.0, containing 2 M guanidine and 5 mM DTT. The fractions were analyzed by SDS-PAGE and those containing purified Tbp2 were
20 pooled. Triton X-100 was added to the pooled Tbp2 fraction to a final concentration of 0.1%. The fraction was then dialyzed overnight at 4°C against PBS, and then centrifuged at 20,000 x g for 30 min. The protein
25 remained soluble under these conditions and the purified Tbp2 was stored at -20°C. Figure 22 shows the SDS PAGE analysis of fractions of the purification
30 process for rTbp2 from strain 4223 (Panel A) and strain Q8 (Panel B). The rTbp2 was at least 70% pure.

Groups of five BALB/c mice were injected three times subcutaneously (s.c.) on days 1, 29 and 43 with
35 purified rTbp2 (0.3 mg to 10 mg) from *M. catarrhalis* strains 4223 and Q8 in the presence or absence of AlPO₄

(1.5 mg per dose). Blood samples were taken on days 14, 28, 42 and 56 for analysing the anti-rTbp2 antibody titers by EIAs.

Groups of two rabbits and two guinea pigs (Charles River, Quebec) were immunized intramuscularly (i.m.) on day 1 with a 5 mg dose of purified rTbp2 protein emulsified in complete Freund's adjuvant (CFA). Animals were boosted on days 14 and 29 with the same dose of protein emulsified in incomplete Freund's adjuvant (IFA). Blood samples were taken on day 42 for analysing anti-rTbp2 antibody titers and bactericidal activity. Table 2 below shows the bactericidal activity of antibodies raised to the recombinant transferrin binding proteins rTbp1 (4223), rTbp2 (4223) and rTbp2 (Q8), prepared as described in these Examples, against *M. catarrhalis* strains 4223 and Q8.

Example 17

This Example illustrates the binding of Tbp2 to human transferrin *in vitro*.

Transferrin-binding activity of Tbp2 was assessed according to the procedures of Schryvers and Lee (ref. 28) with modifications. Briefly, purified rTbp2 was subjected to discontinuous electrophoresis through 12.5% SDS-PAGE gels. The proteins were electrophoretically transferred to PVDF membrane and incubated with horseradish peroxidase-conjugated human transferrin (HRP-human transferrin, 1:50 dilution) (Jackson ImmunoResearch Labs Inc., Mississauga, Ontario) at 4°C for overnight. LumiGLO substrate (Kirkegaard & Perry Laboratories, Inc., Gaithersburg, MD) was used for chemiluminescent detection of HRP activity according to the manufacturer's instructions. Both 4223 rTbp2 and Q8 rTbp2 bind to human transferrin under these conditions, as shown in Figure 24.

Example 18

This Example illustrates antigenic conservation of

Tbp2 amongst *M. catarrhalis* strains.

Whole cell lysates of *M. catarrhalis* strains and *E. coli* strains expressing recombinant Tbp2 proteins were separated by SDS-PAGE and electrophoretically transferred to PVDF membrane. Guinea pig anti-4223 rTbp2 or anti-Q8 rTbp2 antisera were used as first antibody and alkaline phosphatase conjugated goat anti-guinea pig antibody was used as second antibody to detect Tbp2. *M. catarrhalis* strains 3, 56, 135, 585, 4223, 5191, 8185 and ATCC 25240 were tested and all showed specific reactivity with anti-4223 rTbp2 or anti-Q8 rTbp2 antibody (Figure 25).

Table 3 illustrates the ability of anti-rTbp2 antibodies from one *M. catarrhalis* strain to recognize native or recombinant protein from a homologous or heterologous *M. catarrhalis* strain.

Example 19

This Example illustrates PCR amplification of the *tbpB* gene from *M. catarrhalis* strain R1 and characterization of the amplified R1 *tbpB* gene.

Chromosomal DNA from *M. catarrhalis* strain R1 was prepared using standard techniques. The design of the oligonucleotide sense primer was based on a region approximately 274 bases upstream of the *M. catarrhalis* 4223 *tbpB* gene, and the antisense primer was based upon a region approximately 11 bases downstream of the end of 4223 *tbpB*. The following primers were used:

sense primer (4940): 5' GATATAAGCACGCCCTACTT 3'
(SEQ ID No: 48)
antisense primer (4967): 5' CCCATCAGCCAAACAAACATTGTGT 3'
(SEQ ID No: 49).

Each reaction tube contained 10 mM Tris-HCl (pH 8.85), 25 mM KCl, 5 mM $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$, 2 mM MgSO_4 , 800 mM dNTPs, 1.0 mg each of primers 4940 and 4967, 10 ng of R1 DNA, and 2.5 U Pwo DNA polymerase (Boehringer

Mannheim) in a total volume of 100 µl. The thermocycler was programmed for 5 min at 95°C, followed by 25 cycles of 95°C for 30 sec, 50°C for 45 sec, and 72°C for 2 min, and a 10 min final elongation elongation at 72°C. The amplified product was purified using a Geneclean (BIO 101) according to the manufacturer's instructions, and sequenced.

A partial restriction map of *M. catarrhalis* strain R1 *tbpB* prepared as just described is shown in Figure 26. The nucleotide and deduced amino acid sequences of the PCR amplified R1 *tbpB* gene are shown in Figure 27. The R1 *tbpB* gene encodes a 714 amino acid protein of molecular weight 76.8 kDa. The leader sequence of the R1 Tbp2 protein is identical to that of the 4223 and Q8 Tbp2 proteins. When the deduced R1 Tbp2 sequence was aligned with the 4223 Tbp2 sequence, it was found to be 83% identical and 88% homologous (Fig. 28). The conserved LEGGFYG (SEQ ID No: 50) epitope was present, as found in Tbp2 from other *M. catarrhalis* strains as well as the *H. influenzae* and *N. meningitidis* Tbp2 proteins.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

In summary of this disclosure, the present invention provides purified and isolated DNA molecules containing transferrin receptor genes of *Moraxella catarrhalis*, the sequences of these transferrin receptor genes, and the derived amino acid sequences thereof. The genes and DNA sequences are useful for diagnosis, immunization, and the generation of diagnostic and immunological reagents. Immunogenic compositions, including vaccines, based upon expressed recombinant Tbp1 and/or Tbp2, portions thereof, or analogs thereof, can be prepared for prevention of diseases caused by *Moraxella*. Modifications are possible within the scope of this invention.

TABLE I

**BACTERICIDAL ANTIBODY TITRES FOR
M. CATARRHALIS ANTIGENS**

ANTIGEN ¹	SOURCE OF ANTISERA ²	BACTERICIDAL TITRE ³ RH408 ⁴		BACTERICIDAL TITRE Q8 ⁵	
		Pre-Immune	Post-Immune	Pre-Immune	Post-Immune
TBP1	GP	< 3.0	4.2-6.9	< 3.0	4.4.-6.2
TBP2	GP	< 3.0	12.0-13.6	< 3.0	< 3.0-4.0

1 antigens isolated from *M. catarrhalis* 4223

2 GP = guinea pig

3 bactericidal titres: expressed in log₂ as the dilution of antiserum capable of killing 50% of cells

4 *M. catarrhalis* RH408 is a non-clumping derivative of *M. catarrhalis* 4223

5 *M. catarrhalis* Q8 is a clinical isolate which displays a non-clumping phenotype

TABLE 2

Antigen	Bactericidal titre - RH408		Bactericidal titre - Q8	
	pre-immune	post-immune	pre-immune	post-immune
rTbp1 (4223)	< 3.0	< 3.0	< 3.0	< 3.0
rTbp2 (4223)	< 3.0	10-15	< 3.0	< 3.0
rTbp2 (Q8)	NT	NT	< 3.0	5.5-7.5

Antibody titres are expressed in \log_2 as the dilution of antiserum capable of killing 50% of cells

NT = not tested

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TABLE 3

ELISA titres for anti-rTbp2 antibodies recognizing native or rTbp2 from strain 4223 or rTbp2 from strain Q8

Coated antigen	Anti-rTbp2 (4223) Antibody Titres		Anti-rTbp2 (Q8) Antibody Titres	
	Rabbit antisera	Guinea pig antisera	Rabbit antisera	Guinea pig antisera
Native Tbp2 (4223)	409,600	1,638,400	25,600	51,200
	204,800	1,638,400	25,600	102,400
rTbp2 (4223)	409,600	1,638,400	102,400	204,800
	409,600	1,638,400	102,400	204,800
rTbp2 (Q8)	409,600	1,638,400	1,638,400	1,638,400
	102,400	1,638,400	409,600	1,638,400

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